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A Eulogy on the Life and
Character of John Quincy Adams



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A

EULOGY

ON THE LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,

DELIVERED AT THE REQUEST

OF THE LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

IN FANEUIL HALL,

APRIL 15, 1848.

"Ego vero te, cum vitæ flore tum mortis opportunitate, divino consilio et ortum et
extinctum esse arbitror."

CICERO DE ORAT. III. 4.

BY EDWARD EVERETT.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

A CONSIDERABLE resemblance will be perceived, in the narrative part, between the following Eulogy and other discourses of the same description, which have been published since President Adams's decease. This similarity arises from the fact that the biographical portion of all these performances, (as far as I am aware,) has for the most part been derived, directly or indirectly, from a common source, viz., the memoir prepared for the National Portrait Gallery, in 1839, by Rev. C. W. Upham, of Salem. That memoir was drawn up from authentic sources, and is the principal authority for the biographical notices contained in the following pages. It has, however, been in my power to extend some of the details, and to add others wholly new, from materials kindly furnished to me by Mr. Charles Francis Adams, from the papers of his honored father. A few facts have been given from personal recollection, and this number could have been greatly increased, had the nature of the occasion rendered it proper to enlarge upon the subject of Mr. Adams's administration, during the whole of which, as a member of Congress possessing his confidence, and for the last half of his administration as chairman of the committee of foreign affairs, I had occasion to be in constant and intimate communication with him.

The communications of the Hon. Joseph E. Sprague to the Salem Register, written during the period pending the presidential election of 1824, contain a great deal of information of the highest value and interest, relative to the life, services, and career of Mr. Adams.

Some new facts of interest are contained in the admirable sermon delivered by Rev. Mr. Lunt, at Quincy, a performance rendering any further eulogy superfluous.

A few passages in the following discourse, omitted in the delivery on account of its length, are inserted in the printed copy.

EDWARD EVERETT.

CAMBRIDGE, 17TH APRIL, 1848.

E U L O G Y .

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

AND YOU, GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATURE :—

You have devolved upon me the honorable duty of delivering a Eulogy on the life and character of the late President Adams; but the performance of that duty has been already, in no small degree, anticipated. Most eloquent voices in the two Houses of Congress, inspired by the emotions which the great closing scene was so well calculated to produce, have been heard in commemoration of his talents, his services, and his worth. Distinguished members of your own honorable bodies have given utterance, on behalf of the people of Massachusetts, to those feelings of respect and admiration, with which they claim him as their own. The funeral obsequies have been performed, in the most solemn and touching manner, at the seat of government. The population of the great cities of the Union has formed, I had almost said, one mighty funeral procession, to pay the last passing tribute to the mortal remains of the departed statesman, as they have been borne through

the country, with that unexampled and most honorable attendance of a congressional delegation from every State in the Union. Those honored relics have been received with every demonstration of public respect within these venerated walls; and they have been laid down in their final resting-place, with rites the most affecting and impressive, amidst the tears and blessings of relatives, friends, and neighbors, in his village home.

Falling, as he has done, at a period of high political excitement, and entertaining and expressing, as he ever did, opinions the most decided in the boldest and most uncompromising manner, he has yet been mourned, as an object of respect and veneration, by good men and patriots of every party name. Leaders, that rarely met him or each other but in opposition, unite in doing honor to his memory, and have walked side by side in the funeral train.

His eulogy has been pronounced, as far as some of the wisest and ablest in the land can do justice to the theme. His death has been lamented, as far as such a close of such a career can be a subject of lamentation. The sable drapery that hangs around us still recalls the public sorrows, with which all that was mortal of the departed statesman was received beneath this consecrated roof. Gladly, as far as I am concerned, would I leave in silence the illustrious subject of these mournful honors to the reverent contempla-

tion of his countrymen, the witnesses of his career ; of the young men who will learn it, in part, from still recent tradition ;—and of those who succeed us, who will find the memorials of his long, laborious, and eventful life, in the archives of the country and on the pages of its history.

But you, Gentlemen of the Legislature, have ordered otherwise. You have desired that a more formal expression of respect for the memory of our illustrious fellow-citizen should be made on your behalf. You have wished to place on record a deliberate testimonial of your high sense of his exalted worth. Leaving to the historian of the country to fill some of his brightest and most instructive pages with the full description of his various, long-continued, and faithful services, you have wished, while the impression of his loss is still fresh upon our minds, that those services should be the subject of such succinct review and such honest eulogium, as the nature of the occasion admits, and it has been in my power, under the pressure of other engagements, most imperfectly to prepare.

Permit me to add, Gentlemen, that I find, in the circumstances under which you have invited me to this duty, the rule which ought to govern me in its performance. By a legislature composed of members belonging to the various political parties of the day, I have been unanimously requested to undertake this honorable and delicate trust. I see, in this fact, the

proof, that it is as little your expectation as your wish that the eulogy should rekindle the animosities, if any there be, which time has long since subdued, and death has, I trust, extinguished forever. I come, at your request, to strew flowers upon the grave of an illustrious fellow-citizen ; not to dig there, with hateful assiduity, for roots of bitterness. I shall aim to strip my humble narrative of all the interest which it would derive from espousing present or past controversies. Some such I shall wholly pass over ; to some I shall but allude ; on none shall I dwell farther than is necessary to acquit my duty. Called to survey a career which commences with the Revolution, and covers the entire political history of the country as an independent nation, there are no subjects of absorbing political interest, ever agitated in the country, which it would not be easy to put in requisition on this occasion ; subjects, in reference to which the roof that covers us, from the year 1764 to the present day, has resounded with appeals, that have stirred the public heart to its inmost fibre. Easy did I say ? The difficulty will rather be to avoid these topics of controversy, and yet do any thing like justice to the occasion and the theme. I am sure that I shall consult your feelings not less than my own, if I try to follow our illustrious fellow-citizen through the various stages of his career, without mingling ourselves in the party struggles of the day ; to exhibit him in the just

lineaments and fair proportions of life, without the exaggerated colorings of passion ; true to nature, but serene as the monumental marble ; warm with the purest sympathies and deepest affections of humanity, but purified and elevated into the earthly transfiguration of Genius, Patriotism, and Faith.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS was of a stock in which some of the best qualities of the New England character existed in their happiest combination. The basis of that character lies in what, for want of a better name, we must still call "Puritanism," connected, as that term of reproach is, with some associations, calculated to lessen our respect for one of the noblest manifestations of our nature. But, in the middle of the last century, Puritanism in New England had laid aside much of its sternness and its intolerance, and had begun to reconcile itself with the milder charities of life ; retaining, however, amidst all classes of the population, as much patriarchal simplicity of manners, as probably ever existed in a modern civilized community. In the family of the elder President Adams, the narrow range of ideas, which, in most things, marked the first generations, had been enlarged by academic education, and by the successful pursuit of a liberal profession ; and the ancient severity of manners had been still farther softened by the kindly influences exerted by a mother who, in the dutiful language of him

whom we now commemorate, "united all the virtues which adorn and dignify the female and the Christian character."

The period at which he was born was one of high and stirring interest. A struggle impended over the colonies, differing more in form than in its principles, from that which took place in England a little more than a century earlier. The agitations which preceded it were of a nature to strain to their highest tension both the virtues and capacities of men. Of the true character of the impending events, no one seems earlier to have formed a distinct conception than the elder President Adams. He appears, at the very commencement of the Seven Years' War, and when he was but twenty years old, to have formed a general anticipation of all the great events, which have successively taken place for the last century. He seems dimly to have foreseen, even then, the independence of the colonies, and the establishment of a great naval power in the West. The capture of Quebec, followed by the total downfall of the French power on this continent, while it promised, as the first consequence, an indefinite extension of the British empire, suggested another train of results to the far-sighted and reflecting. History presents to us but few coincidences more instructive, than that which unites the peace of 1763, which ratified these great successes of British policy and British arms,

with the conception of that plan of American taxation, which resulted in the severance of the British empire. John Adams perceived, perhaps, before any other person, that the mother country, in depriving France of her American colonies, had dispossessed herself of her own. The first battles of American independence were gained on the heights of Abraham.

I revert to these events, because they mark the character of the period when the life which we commemorate began. The system of American taxation was adopted in 1764. The Stamp Act was passed in 1765. The Essays on "the Canon and Feudal Law," of President Adams, were written the same year. In 1766, the Stamp Act was repealed, but the repeal was accompanied with the assertion of a right to tax America. This right was exercised the following year, by the imposition of duties on several articles imported into the colonies, and, on the 11th of June, of that year, John Quincy Adams was born. He came into life with the struggling rights of his country. "The cradle hymns of the child were the songs of liberty."* He received the first parental instructions from one, to whom the United Colonies had already begun to look for encouragement and guidance, in the mighty crisis of their fate.

It would be interesting to trace, in their operation upon the opening mind of the child, the effect of

* Mr. Senator Davis.

the exciting events of the day. Beneath the roof of the elder Adams, the great doctrines of English liberty, for which our fathers contended, were household words. He was barely three years old, when his father,—the ardent patriot, the zealous son of liberty,—appeared in court, as the counsel for the soldiers, who had fired upon the people in Boston, on the 5th of March, 1770. Two years later, his father was negatived by the Royal Governor, as a member of the Executive Council. In 1774, the port of Boston was shut, the Continental Congress agreed upon, and his father elected one of the four delegates, who represented Massachusetts in that assembly at Philadelphia. In 1775, the appeal was made to arms; and George Washington was appointed to the chief command of the American forces, on the emphatic recommendation of John Adams. In 1776, independence was declared, on the report of a committee, on which Thomas Jefferson and John Adams stood first and second, and was triumphantly carried through Congress, mainly by the fervid eloquence of Adams. All these great events,—eras in our history, (and, may I not say, eras in the civilized world? witness the convulsions now shaking Continental Europe to the centre,)—although they occupy but a few chapters in the compends in which we read them, filled years of doubtful, strenuous, resolute exertion in the lives of our fathers. They were brought

home to the fireside at which young Adams was trained, by his father's daily participation; by his letters, when absent; by the sympathizing mother's anxieties, hopes, and fears. There was not a time for years, when, to ask the question under that roof, "Will America establish her liberties?" would not have been asking, in other words, "Shall we see our father's face in peace again?" It may fairly be traced to these early impressions, that the character of John Quincy Adams exhibited through life so much of what is significantly called "the spirit of seventy-six."

And here I may be permitted to pause for a moment, to pay a well deserved tribute of respect to the memory of the excellent mother, to whose instructions so much of the subsequent eminence of the son is due. No brighter example exists of auspicious maternal influence, in forming the character of a great and good man. Her letters to him, some of which have been preserved and given to the world, might almost be called a manual of a wise mother's advice. The following passage from one of her published letters, written when her son was seven years old, will show how the minds of children were formed in the revolutionary period. "I have taken," she says, "a very great fondness for reading Rollin's Ancient History since you left me. I am determined to go through with it, if possible, in these days of my

solitude. I find great pleasure and entertainment from it, and have persuaded Johnny to read a page or two every day; and hope he will *from his desire to oblige me*, entertain a fondness for it." In that one phrase lies all the philosophy of education. The child of seven years old, who reads a serious book with fondness, from his desire to oblige his mother, has entered the high road of usefulness and honor.

The troubled state of the times probably interfered with school education. John Quincy Adams, I believe, never went to a school in America. Besides the instruction which he received from his mother, he was aided by the young gentlemen who studied law under his father. It is to one of these that allusion is made, in the following child's letter, written to his father, at Philadelphia, before he was ten years old, which I think you will not be displeased at hearing from the original manuscript.

"BRAINTREE, JUNE the 2d, 1777.

"DEAR SIR,—I love to receive letters very well, much better than I love to write them. I make but a poor figure at composition, my head is much too fickle. My thoughts are running after birds' eggs, play, and trifles, till I get vexed with myself. Mamma has a troublesome task to keep me steady, and I own I am ashamed of myself. I have but just entered the third volume of Smollet, though I had designed to have got half through it by this time. I have determined this week to be more diligent, as Mr. Thaxter will be absent at court, and I cannot pur-

sue my other studies. I have set myself a stint, and determine to read the third volume half out. If I can but keep my resolution, I will write again at the end of the week, and give a better account of myself. I wish, sir, you would give me some instructions with regard to my time, and advise me how to proportion my studies and my play, in writing, and I will keep them by me and endeavor to follow them. I am, dear sir, with a present determination of growing better,

Yours,

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

P. S.—Sir, if you will be so good as to favor me with a blank book, I will transcribe the most remarkable occurrences I meet with in my reading, which will serve to fix them upon my mind.”

Such was the boy at the age of ten years !

We shall find, in the sequel, that the classical rule was not departed from, in the farther progress of his character.

—— servetur ad imum

Qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet.

At this early period of his life, the horizon at once bursts widely open before him. From the bosom of a New England village, in which he had never been to school, he is transferred, before he is eleven years old, to the capital of France. Among the great movements of the revolution, no one is of greater importance than the alliance with France. It gave a character to the struggle in the eyes of the world, and eventually threw the whole political weight of

continental Europe into the American scale. In the course of 1776, Silas Deane, Dr. Franklin, and Arthur Lee, were appointed commissioners to France, on behalf of Congress. Deane was recalled the following year, and, in the month of November, 1777, John Adams was appointed his successor. Desirous of giving his son, then ten years and a half of age, those advantages of education which his native country did not at that time afford, he took him to France. They sailed in the Boston frigate, commanded by Commodore Tucker, on the 13th February, 1778, and reached Bordeaux in the month of April, after a tempestuous passage over an ocean covered with the enemy's cruisers.

The father established himself at Passy, the residence of Dr. Franklin; and here, for the first time, I find any mention of the son's receiving any other instruction than that of the fireside. Here he was sent to school, and laid the foundation for that intimate acquaintance with the French language, which he retained through life, and which was of the greatest service to him in his subsequent diplomatic career. It needs scarcely be added, that the occasional intercourse of Dr. Franklin, and of the eminent persons of almost every part of Europe, who sought the society of the American commissioners at Passy, was not lost upon one, who, though still in his boyhood, possessed uncommon maturity of character.

The counsels of the faithful and affectionate mother followed him beyond the sea. In one of the admirable letters to which I have referred, written during the visit to France, she says:—"Let me enjoin it upon you to attend constantly and steadfastly to the instructions of your father, as you value the happiness of your mother and your own welfare. His care and attention to you render many things unnecessary for me to write, which I might otherwise do. But the inadvertency and heedlessness of youth require line upon line and precept upon precept, and when enforced by the joint efforts of both parents, will, I hope, have a due influence upon your conduct; for, dear as you are to me, I would much rather you should have found your grave in the ocean you have crossed, or that any untimely death should crop you in your infant years, than see you an immoral, profligate, or graceless child." * .

How faithfully the favored child availed himself of his uncommon privileges, needs hardly be said. At an age when the most forward children are rarely distinguished, except among their fellows at school, he had attracted the notice of many of the eminent persons who cultivated the acquaintance of his father. Mr. John Adams, in a letter to his wife, of 14th May, 1779, says:—"My son has had great opportunities to see this country; but this has unavoidably retarded his education in some other things. He has enjoyed

* Mrs. Adams's Letters, I. 123.

perfect health from first to last, and is respected wherever he goes, for his vigor and vivacity both of mind and of body, for his constant good-humor, and for his rapid progress in French, as well as for his general knowledge, which at his age is uncommon." Though proceeding from the fond pen of a father, there is no doubt this character was entirely true.*

The treaty of alliance with France had been concluded in the interval between Mr. Adams's appointment and his arrival. Dr. Franklin was appointed

* The following letter, written from school, to his father, is without date, but must have been written shortly after his arrival in France. It is not without interest, as a memorial of the first steps of a great mind : —

“ My work for a day :—

“ Make Latin,

Explain Cicero,

“ Erasmus,

“ Appendix,

Peirce Phædrus, (Qu. parse),

Learn Greek Racines,

“ Greek Grammar,

Geography,

Geometry,

Fractions,

Writing,

Drawing.

“ As a young boy cannot apply himself to all those things, and keep a remembrance of them all, I should desire that you would let me know what of those I must begin upon at first.

“ I am your dutiful son,

“ JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.”

resident minister to the Court of Versailles, and Mr. Lee to Madrid; and, after a residence of about a year and a half at Paris, Mr. Adams, without waiting to be recalled, determined to return to the United States. He was invited by the king to take passage, with his son, on board the French frigate *La Sensible*, which was appointed to convey to America the Chevalier de la Luzerne, the first minister to the United States, and the secretary of legation, the Marquis Barbè Marbois, afterwards well known through all the phases of the French Revolution. They landed in Boston, August 2, 1779. At the moment of their return to the United States, an election was in progress for delegates to the Convention which formed the Constitution of Massachusetts, and Mr. Adams, barely landed in America, was returned for his native town of Braintree.

The convention assembled in Cambridge, on the 1st of September, 1779, and having chosen a committee of thirty-one, to prepare their work, adjourned to the 28th October. John Adams was of this committee, and, on the day of the adjournment, reported the first draught of a Declaration of Rights and a Constitution. In the interval, he had received from Congress a new commission to negotiate a peace with Great Britain, and on the 14th of November, 1779, he again took passage on board *La Sensible*, on her return voyage to Europe. He had barely passed

three months in the country, during which he had drawn up a Constitution, that remains, after seventy years,—in all material respects,—the frame of government under which we live; has served, in some degree, as a model for other State Constitutions, and even for that of the United States; and under which, as we hope, our children, to the latest posterity, will continue to enjoy the blessings of rational liberty. I have dwelt a moment longer on these incidents, to illustrate the domestic influences under which John Quincy Adams was trained.

He was again the companion of his father on this second wintry voyage to Europe. The frigate sprung a leak through stress of weather, and, though bound to Brest, was obliged to put into Ferrol, a port in the northwestern corner of Spain. Here they arrived on the 7th of December, and were obliged to perform the journey partly on horses and mules through Galicia, Asturias, and Biscay, in midwinter, to Paris. Mr. Adams was accompanied, on this voyage, by Charles, his second son, long since deceased, and by Mr. Francis Dana, afterwards chief justice of Massachusetts, then acting as Secretary of Legation to Mr. Adams. Mr. Adams remained in Paris till midsummer of 1780, during which time the children were again placed at a boarding-school. In July of that year, he repaired to Holland, with a commission from Congress to negotiate a treaty with the republic of the Netherlands,

for the recognition of the independence of the United States. The boys were sent to the public school of the city of Amsterdam, and afterwards transferred to the academical department of the University at Leyden, at that time not inferior in celebrity to any place of education on the continent of Europe. In July, 1781, Mr. Dana, who, in the preceding October, had received a commission from Congress as Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. Petersburg, started for that capital, taking with him John Quincy Adams as private secretary and interpreter, being then just fourteen years of age. In this capacity, he was recognized by Congress, and there is, perhaps, no other case of a person so young being employed in a civil office of trust, under the government of the United States. But, in Mr. Adams's career, there was no boyhood.

The youthful secretary remained at St. Petersburg till October, 1782, during which period, the nature of his occupations was such, as to perfect his knowledge of the French language, and to give him, young as he was, no small insight into the political system of Europe, of which the American question was, at that time, the leading topic. He also devoted himself with assiduity to his studies, and pursued an extensive course of general reading. The official business of the American minister, who was not publicly received by the Empress Catherine, was mostly transacted with the Marquis de Verac, the French Ambassador, be-

tween whom and Mr. Dana, young Adams acted as interpreter.* In October, 1782, Mr. Adams senior brought to a close his arduous mission in Holland, by concluding a treaty of amity, navigation, and commerce with the States General, which remains in force between the two countries to this day. On the very next day, he started for Paris, to perform his duty, as joint commissioner with Dr. Franklin and Mr. Jay, to negotiate with the British envoys for peace; and about the same time, his son left St. Petersburg for Holland. The young man, then but a little more than fifteen years of age, made the long journey from the Russian capital alone, passing through Sweden, Denmark, and the Hanse towns, and arriving at the Hague in the spring of 1783. Here his studies were resumed, and pursued for a few months, till he was sent for by his father to Paris, where he was present at the signing of the definitive treaty of peace in the month of September, 1783. I remember to have heard him say, that, acting as his father's secretary, he prepared one of the copies of that treaty.

The two succeeding years were passed by young Adams mostly with his father, in England, Holland, and France, in which several countries, Mr. Adams senior was employed on the public business. During this period, his attention was divided between his studies, elementary and classical, and his employment

* Mrs. Adams's Letters, Vol. II. 157.

as his father's secretary. "Congress are at such grievous expense," his father writes, "that I shall have no other secretary than my son. He, however, is a very good one. He writes a good hand very fast, and is steady to his pen and his books."* By the time he had reached the age of eighteen, besides being well advanced in the branches of study usually taught at schools, he was, no doubt, one of the most accomplished young men of his time. In addition to a good foundation in Latin and Greek, he was master of the French ; he had read extensively in that language and in the English ; he had seen several of the principal countries of Europe ; and he had watched, with a closeness beyond his years, but required by his position, the political history of Europe during a very eventful lustrum. In short, since he was twelve years old, he had talked with men.

But his own judgment suggested to him that a longer residence in Europe was not, at this time, expedient. His father was appointed Minister to the Court of St. James, in May, 1785 ; and, resisting the temptation to take up his residence with the family at London, now joined by that beloved mother from whom he had been so long separated, the son obtained the permission of his parents to return to the United States, for the sake of completing his academic education at Cambridge. He arrived in New York, in July,

* Letters of John Adams, Vol. II. 102.

1785. He was the bearer of a long letter from Mr. Jefferson, then Minister of the United States at Paris, to Mr. Vice President Gerry, in which Mr. Jefferson says, "I congratulate your country on their prospect in this young man." He passed about six months at Haverhill, in the family of the Rev. Mr. Shaw, his maternal relative, during which time he read over the books in which it was necessary to be examined for admission to advanced standing at college, none of which, with the exception of Horace, had been read by him before. He was admitted to the junior class at the university on 15th March, 1786. The usual payment required of students entering to advanced standing was, in his case, dispensed with; "the corporation and overseers having voted, as a mark of gratitude to his father for the important services rendered by him to the United States, that he should be admitted free of all charge to whatever standing he should, upon examination, be found qualified for."* Thus began his connexion with the university, of which he remained, to the rest of his life, a dutiful and an honored son, and a liberal benefactor.

Possessing, by nature, talents of the highest order, especially that which is among the soonest developed in the human mind, the talent of memory,—having enjoyed great and peculiar advantages for general improvement in Europe,—and now applying himself,

* College Records.

with untiring assiduity, to his studies, he was soon generally regarded as standing at the head of his class. Such is the testimony of a venerable magistrate, (Mr. Justice Putnam,) who permits me to quote his authority, himself one of the most distinguished members of the class. I may add, on the same authority, that Adams, though of manners somewhat reserved, was distinguished for his generous feelings, his amiable temper, and engaging social qualities, to all which were added unshaken firmness of principle, and spotless purity of life. He was, from the outset, eminently one of those, who, in the golden words of President Kirkland, "need not the smart of guilt to make them virtuous, nor the regret of folly to make them wise." He took his first degree at the Commencement of 1787, receiving the second place in the usual assignment of college honors, the first having been given to a classmate who, to distinguished scholarship in other respects, was thought to add superior skill in declamation. The subject of his oration shows the mature cast of his thought. It was "The Importance and Necessity of Public Faith to the Well-Being of a Community."

He immediately commenced the study of the law at Newburyport, under the late Chief Justice Parsons, who had already attained the reputation, in this part of the country, of being the most acute and learned jurist of the day. At the end of his three

years' noviciate, Mr. Adams removed to Boston, and established himself in the practice of his profession. Three eventful years at home; in which the constitution of the United States had been framed and adopted, and George Washington and John Adams elected to the two first offices under the new government. Three eventful years abroad, in which the French revolution,—the first French revolution,—had moved rapidly forward from that stage of early promise, in which it was hailed by the sympathy of the friends of liberty in England and America, toward those excesses and crimes, which caused it to be afterwards viewed with anxiety, disgust, and horror. Mr. Adams was among the first who suspected the downward tendency. In 1791 he wrote a series of articles, in the *Boston Centinel*, with the signature of *Publicola*, which were intended as a corrective to some of the doctrines in Paine's *Rights of Man*. These fugitive essays were republished in London as an answer to Paine's work, and there ascribed to the author's father, John Adams. In 1793, on the breaking out of the war between Great Britain and France, a question of the utmost importance arose, how far the United States were bound, by the treaty of alliance with France, to take sides in the controversy. The division of opinion on this point, which commenced in the cabinet of General Washington, extended throughout the country. The question was

at length practically decided, by President Washington's proclamation of neutrality. Before that important document appeared, Mr. Adams had published a short series of articles in the *Boston Centinel*, with the signature of Marcellus, maintaining the same doctrine. In these papers, he developed the two principles on which his policy as an American statesman rested,—union at home, and independence of all foreign combinations abroad.* On the 4th July, 1793, he delivered the usual anniversary oration before the citizens of Boston; and in the course of the following winter he wrote another series of articles for the public papers, with the signature of Columbus, in which the neutral policy of the United States was farther developed and maintained, and the principles of the law of nations, applicable to the situation of the country, in reference to the European belligerents, more fully unfolded.

I dwell upon these fugitive essays, thrown off no doubt in brief hours of leisure amidst the occupations of a laborious profession, because they established at once the reputation of their author, as one of the soundest thinkers and most forcible writers of the day. They exercised a decided influence over his career in life. They were read at the seat of government; and in the month of May, 1794, without any previous intimation of his design, either to his father, the vice-president, or himself, President Washington

* Mr. Upham's Memoir.

nominated Mr. John Q. Adams, minister resident at the Hague, a diplomatic station, at that period, scarcely inferior to the leading courts. Mr. Adams arrived in Holland about the time of the French invasion, and the consequent disorganization of the government and the country. The embarrassments arising from this state of things led him to think of resigning his office and coming home; but it was the advice of the president,* accompanied with the approval of his conduct, that he should remain at his post. In the last year of his administration, (1796,) Washington appointed him minister plenipotentiary to Lisbon.

About this period of his life, and during a temporary residence in London, for the purpose of exchanging the ratifications of the treaty with Great Britain, and making arrangements for executing some of its provisions, the acquaintance of Mr. Adams commenced with the daughter of Mr. Joshua Johnson, of Maryland,—a gentleman then acting as consular agent of the United States at London. A matrimonial engagement took place, which resulted, on the 26th July, 1797, in his marriage with the accomplished and venerable lady, who for more than fifty years was the faithful partner of his affections and honors, and survives to deplore his loss.

Mr. Adams, senior, was chosen president in the autumn of 1796. On this occasion he was naturally led to contemplate with some anxiety the public rela-

* Washington's Works, xi. 56.

tions of his son. On this point he took counsel of the truest of friends and safest of advisers, President Washington, and received from him that celebrated letter of the 20th of February, 1797, a sentence from which is inscribed on yonder wall:—"I give it as my decided opinion," says President Washington, "that Mr. Adams is the most valuable character we have abroad, and that he will prove himself to be the ablest of all our diplomatic corps." With this opinion, he expressed the hope and the wish, that Mr. Adams's advancement might not be checked by an over-delicacy on his father's part.

Circumstances rendering it inexpedient, at that time, to establish the mission to Portugal, Mr. Adams's destination was changed to Berlin. He received the appointment as minister to Prussia, on the 31st May, 1797. In the summer of 1798, retaining his office as minister to Prussia, he was commissioned to negotiate a treaty with Sweden. During his mission at Berlin, he concluded a treaty of amity and commerce, after a very able and protracted negotiation, in which the rights of neutral commerce were discussed by Mr. Adams and the Prussian commissioners. In the summer of 1800, he made a tour in Silesia, and wrote an interesting and instructive series of letters, containing the result of his observations. They were published without his consent in the Portfolio, at Philadelphia, collected in a volume at Lon-

don, and translated into French and German. With a view to perfect his acquaintance with the German, Mr. Adams, during his residence at Berlin, executed a complete metrical version of Wieland's *Oberon*, not being aware at the time that it had been already translated in England.

He was recalled toward the close of his father's administration, but did not arrive in America till September, 1801. In the following spring, he was elected to the senate of Massachusetts for the county of Suffolk, and in the course of the year was chosen by the legislature a senator of the United States, for the senatorial term commencing on the 3d of March, 1803. His term of service in the senate of the United States fell upon one of the great periods of crisis in our political history. The party which had supported his father, and to which he himself belonged, had fallen into divisions, in the course of his father's administration. These divisions had contributed to the revolution by which Mr. Jefferson was brought into power. The excitements growing out of this state of things were not yet allayed, but connected themselves, as all domestic questions did, with the absorbing questions that grew out of the foreign relations of the country, in the war which then raged in Europe, and threatened to draw America into the vortex. The senators of Massachusetts differed in their views of the policy required by the emergency,

and those adopted by Mr. Adams, who supported the administration, being at variance with the opinions of a majority of his constituents, he resigned his seat in the senate, in March, 1808.

The repose from political engagements, thus afforded him, was devoted by Mr. Adams to the farther prosecution of pursuits in which he was already engaged, and which, to him, were scarcely less congenial. His literary tastes had always been fondly and assiduously cultivated, and, for a public man, his habits were decidedly studious. On the death of President Willard, in 1804, several of the influential friends of Harvard College had urged upon Mr. Adams, to allow himself to be considered as a candidate for the presidency of the University. These overtures he declined; but in the following year it was determined, by the corporation, to appoint a Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory, on the foundation of Mr. Boylston, and Mr. Adams was chosen. He delivered his inaugural address in July, 1806, and continued to discharge the duties of the professorship, by the delivery of a course of lectures, and by presiding over the public exercises in declamation, till the month of July, 1809. It was at this time, and as a member of one of the younger classes at college, that I first saw Mr. Adams, and listened to his well-remembered voice, from the chair of instruction; little anticipating that, after the lapse of forty years, my own humble voice

would be heard, in the performance of this mournful office.

Some who now hear me will recollect the deep interest with which these lectures were listened to, not merely by the youthful audience for which they were prepared, but by numerous voluntary hearers from the neighborhood. They formed an era in the University; and were, I believe, the first successful attempt, in this country, at this form of instruction in any department of literature. They were collected and published in two volumes, completing the theoretical part of the subject. I think it may be fairly said, that they will bear a favorable comparison with any treatise, on the subject, at that time extant in our language. The standard of excellence, in every branch of critical learning, has greatly advanced in the last forty years, but these lectures may still be read with pleasure and instruction. Considered as a systematic and academical treatise upon a subject which constituted the chief part of the intellectual education of the Greeks and Romans, these lectures, rapidly composed as they were delivered, and not revised by the author before publication, are not to be regarded in the light of a standard performance. But let any statesman or jurist, even of the present day, in America or Europe,—whose life, like Mr. Adams's, has been actively passed in professional and political engagements at home and abroad,—

attempt, in the leisure of two or three summers,—his mind filled with all the great political topics of the day,—to prepare a full course of lectures on any branch of literature, to be delivered to a difficult and scrutinizing, though in part a youthful audience, and then trust them to the ordeal of the press, and he will be prepared to estimate the task which was performed by Mr. Adams.

From these, to him, not distasteful engagements, Mr. Adams was soon recalled to the public service. In March, 1809, he was nominated by President Madison to the Court of St. Petersburg, and, in the summer of the same year, returned to the important court which he had visited twenty-eight years before, in his boyhood, as secretary to Mr. Dana. He came at a critical juncture of affairs, and with great means and occasions of usefulness. The whole foreign world was, at this time, shut out from the Continental Courts, by the iron rigor of the system of Napoleon. America, though little known at the Imperial Court, was regarded with interest, as a rising transatlantic State of great importance, and Mr. Adams appeared as her first accredited representative. He was master of the two foreign languages which,—to the exclusion of the native Russian,—are alone spoken in the political and court circles. He was thus enabled the more easily to form relations of more than ordinary kindness with the emperor and

leading members of the imperial government, and it is well understood to have been through this instrumentality, that the emperor was led to offer his mediation to the United States and Great Britain, in the war then just commenced. The mediation was accepted by the American government, and Mr. Adams was appointed, in conjunction with Messrs. Gallatin and Bayard, to conduct the negotiation. Those gentlemen arrived at St. Petersburg in July, 1813. The Emperor Alexander was absent on the great campaign of that year, but the conferences of the American commissioners were opened with Count Romanzoff, chancellor of the empire. The British government declined to negotiate under the mediation, and Messrs. Bayard and Gallatin left St. Petersburg in January, 1814, Mr. Adams remaining, as resident minister.

But Great Britain, although nominally declining to negotiate under the mediation, accompanied her refusal with an offer to treat for peace with the United States directly, either at Gottenburg or London, and this offer was accepted by the American government, the preference being given to the former place. Mr. Adams was accordingly appointed, in joint commission with Messrs. Bayard, Clay, and Russell, to whom was afterwards added Mr. Gallatin, to negotiate for peace at Gottenburg. Mr. Adams received this commission in April, 1814, with instructions to

proceed immediately to the place just named. He took passage from Revel in the first vessel, after the breaking up of the ice ; and after repeated delay and detention, and great risk from the same cause, he arrived at Stockholm on the 25th of May.

He there learned that an arrangement had been made by Messrs. Bayard and Gallatin,—who were in London,—with the British government, by which the seat of negotiation had been transferred to Ghent. An American sloop-of-war was then at Gottenburg, having, as a cartel, conveyed Messrs. Clay and Russell to that place. Mr. Adams accordingly proceeded from Stockholm to Gottenburg, and, embarking with Mr. Russell on board the sloop-of-war, landed from her at the Texel, and thence proceeded by land to Ghent. There he arrived on the 24th of June, and on that day six months, the treaty of peace was signed. Mr. Adams's name stands first, on the list of the negotiators.

Mr. Adams had been informed by the secretary of state, (Mr. Monroe), at the time he was appointed under the mediation of the emperor of Russia, that, in the event of the conclusion of peace, it was the intention of President Madison to nominate him as minister to London. He accordingly went to Paris, and was there during the presence of the allied monarchs and their armies, and in the Hundred Days. He was joined by his family in March, 1815. Their

hardships and perils, in performing the journey from St. Petersburg to France, in that time of universal commotion and uncertainty, would form an interesting narrative, for which, however, this is not the place. On the 7th of May, he received official information of his appointment; and although the ordinary communications between the two countries were interrupted, and the passage not unattended with delay and difficulty, he arrived in London on the 15th of May. He immediately engaged with his associate commissioners, Messrs. Clay and Gallatin, in negotiating a convention of commerce with Great Britain, which was concluded on the 3d of July, 1815.

Having thus, in happy coincidence with his venerable father's career, coöperated in establishing a peace with Great Britain, he remained, like his father, in London, for two years, as the American Minister at that court. He was then, in 1817, invited by President Monroe to return to America, as Secretary of State under the new administration. I believe it was universally admitted, that a better appointment could not have been made. It will be recollected, by many persons present, that General Jackson, then just beginning to exercise great political influence in the country, spoke of Mr. Adams "as the fittest person for the office;—a man who would stand by the country in the hour of danger."

But the hour of danger did not arrive at home or

abroad during the administration of Mr. Monroe, which continued through two terms of office, for the whole of which Mr. Adams was Secretary of State. During this entire period, he maintained unbroken the most friendly relations with Mr. Monroe, and gave a steady and efficient support to his administration. The office of Secretary of State is, at all times, one of immense labor ; never more so, than in the hands of Mr. Adams. I presume no person in high office ever derived less assistance from those under him, or did more work with his own hands. No opinion, for which he was responsible, was ever taken on trust, upon the examination of others ; no paper of any consequence, to which he was to sign his name, was the product of another man's mind. It would be foreign from my purpose, did time admit, to discuss the measures of public interest which engaged the attention of the government and people of the country during Mr. Monroe's two terms of service in the presidency. His administration will ever be memorable, in our political history, for the substantial fusion of the two great political parties, which led to his unanimous reëlection in 1821. It will also be remembered for the acquisition of Florida, which was ceded by Spain as an indemnification for spoliations, on our commerce. The treaty for this cession was negotiated, with consummate ability, by Mr. Adams, and signed on the 22d of February, 1819. The inde-

pendence of the Spanish provinces on this continent was also recognized under this administration,—a measure rather assented to than warmly approved by Mr. Adams, for he doubted their capacity for self-government; an opinion, of which the soundness is abundantly justified by passing events.

Out of the subsidence of the old parties, sprung the variously contested presidential election of 1824. For a quarter of a century, a succession had been established from the department of state to the presidency. There were certainly good reasons, on the present occasion, why this practice should not be broken in upon; but, in addition to the successful candidate for the vice-presidency, the south and the west brought three presidential candidates into the field, who divided the electoral vote, though unequally, with Mr. Adams. The whole number of votes was two hundred and sixty-one, of which General Jackson received ninety-nine, and Mr. Adams eighty-four. But I think it was calculated, at the time, that Mr. Adams's vote, in the primary assemblies of the people, was not less than his rival's. The choice devolved upon the house of representatives, for the second time since the formation of the present government. The first occasion was in 1801, when the constitution itself had nearly sunk under the struggle, which was prolonged through the second day, and to the thirty-sixth balloting. On the present occasion, the elements of a struggle equally

perilous were thought to exist; and calculation was entirely at fault as to the result. The choice was decided on the first ballot, and fell upon Mr. Adams. It was made known to him in advance of the official communication, by a personal and political friend, who happened to be present; and who, to my question, a few weeks after, how he received the intelligence, answered, "like a philosopher."

Mr. Adams's administration was, in its principles and policy, a continuation of Mr. Monroe's. The special object which he proposed to himself was, to bind the distant parts of the country together, and promote their mutual prosperity, by increased facilities of communication. Unlike Mr. Monroe's, Mr. Adams's administration encountered, from the outset, a formidable and harassing opposition. It is now, I believe, generally admitted to have been honest, able, and patriotic. This praise has lately been accorded to it, in the most generous terms, by distinguished individuals, in Congress and elsewhere, who were not numbered among its supporters. That the president, himself, devoted to the public business the utmost stretch of his Herculean powers of thought and labor, hardly needs to be told.

Two incidents occurred during his administration, which ought not to be wholly passed over in this hasty sketch:—one was the visit of Lafayette, whom Mr. Adams received, at the presidential mansion, with

an address of extraordinary eloquence and beauty; the other, the death of his venerable father, spared to the patriarchal age of ninety-one, and to see his son raised to the presidency, and dying, with his ancient associate, Jefferson, within a few hours of each other, on the fiftieth anniversary of Independence,—which they had been associated in declaring.

At the close of the term of four years, for which Mr. Adams was elected, General Jackson was chosen to succeed him. Mr. Adams, I doubt not, left the office with a lighter heart than he entered it. It was, at this time, his purpose,—as he informed me himself,—on retiring from office, to devote himself to literary labors, and especially to writing the history of his father's life and times. Some commencement was made, by him, of the preliminary labors requisite for this great undertaking. He was, however, though past the meridian of life, in good health. He possessed an undiminished capacity of physical and intellectual action. He had an experience of affairs, larger and more various than any other man in America; and it was felt by the public, that he ought to be induced, if possible, to return to the political service of the country. He was accordingly chosen, at the next congressional election, to represent the people of his native district, in the House of Representatives of the United States.

It was, perhaps, a general impression among his

personal friends, that, in yielding to this call, he had not chosen wisely for his happiness or fame. It was a step never before taken by a retiring chief magistrate. The experience and wisdom of his predecessors had often exerted a salutary influence over public opinion, for the very reason that their voice was heard only from the seclusion of private life, by those who sought their counsel. Mr. Adams was about to expose himself to the violence of political warfare, not always conducted with generosity on the floor of Congress. But in deciding to obey the call of his constituents, he followed, I am confident, not so much the strong bent of his inclination, and the fixed habit of his life, as an inward, all-controlling sense of duty. He was conscious of his capacity to be useful, and his work was not yet done. Besides, he needed no indulgence, he asked no favor, he feared no opposition.

He carried into Congress the diligence, punctuality, and spirit of labor, which were his second—I had almost said his first—nature. My seat was, for two years, by his side; and it would have scarcely more surprised me to miss one of the marble columns of the hall from its pedestal, than to see his chair empty. The two great political questions of the day were those which related to the protective and financial systems. He was placed, by the speaker of the House, at the head of the Committee on Manufactures. He was friendly to the policy of giving our

rising establishments a moderate protection against the irregular pressure of foreign competition. Believing that manufacturing pursuits,—as the great school of mechanical skill,—are an important element of national prosperity, he thought it unwise to allow the compensation of labor in this department to be brought down to the starvation standard of Europe. He was also a firm and efficient champion of the Bank of the United States, then subsisting under a charter of Congress, and, up to that time, conducted, as he thought, with integrity. On these, and all the other topics of the day, he took an active part, employing himself with assiduity in the committee room, preparing elaborate reports, and, occasionally, though not frequently, pouring out the affluence of his mind in debate.

I shall, perhaps, be pardoned, for introducing here a slight personal recollection, which serves, in some degree, to illustrate his habits. The sessions of the two last days of (I think) the twenty-third Congress were prolonged, the one for nineteen, and the other for seventeen hours. At the close of the last day's session, he remained in the hall of the house, the last seated member of the body. One after another of the members had gone home; many of them, for hours. The hall,—brilliantly lighted up, and gaily attended, as was, and perhaps is still, the custom at the beginning of the last evening of a session,—

had become cold, dark, and cheerless. Of the members who remained, to prevent the public business from dying for want of a quorum, most, but himself, were sinking from exhaustion, although they had probably taken their meals at the usual hours, in the course of the day. After the adjournment, I went up to his seat, to join company with him homeward; and, as I knew he came to the house at eight o'clock in the morning, and it was then past midnight, I expressed a hope that he had taken some refreshment in the course of the day. He said he had not left his seat, but, holding up a bit of hard bread in his fingers, gave me to understand in what way he had sustained nature.

Such was his course in the House of Representatives, up to the year 1835, during which I was the daily witness of it, as an humble associate member. Had he retired from Congress at that time, it would have been, perhaps, rather with a reputation brought to the house, than achieved on the floor; a reputation "enough to fill the ambition of a common man," nay, of a very uncommon one; but it would probably have been thought that, surpassing most others, he had hardly equalled himself. But from this time forward, for ten years, (1835-1845,) he assumed a position in a great degree new, and put forth a wonderful increase of energy and power. Some of the former questions, which had long occupied Congress, had

been, at least for the time, disposed of, and new ones came up, which roused Mr. Adams to a higher action of his faculties than he had yet displayed. He was now sixty-eight years of age,—a time of life, I need not say, at which, in most cases, the firmest frame gives way, and the most ardent temper cools; but the spirit of Mr. Adams,—bold and indomitable as his whole life showed it to be,—blazed forth, from this time forward, for ten years, with a fervor and strength which astonished his friends, and stands, as I think, almost, if not quite, without a parallel. I do not forget the limits prescribed to me by the circumstances under which I speak; but no one, capable of estimating the noblest traits of character, can wish me to slur over this period of Mr. Adams's life; no one, but must be touched with the spectacle which, day after day, and month after month, and session after session, was exhibited by him, to whom had now been accorded, by universal consent, the title of the “old man eloquent;”—and far more deserving of it he was, than the somewhat frigid rhetorician on whom it was originally bestowed. There he sat, the deepest-stricken in years, but, of the whole body, the individual most capable of physical endurance and intellectual effort; his bare head erect, while younger men drooped; “his peremptory, eagle-sighted eye” unquenched, both by day and by night:

—— intrepidus vultu, meruitque timeri

Non metuens.

It is unnecessary to state that the new questions, to which I refer, were those connected with slavery. On no great question, perhaps, has the progress of public opinion been more decided, both in Europe and America, than on this subject. It is but a little more than a century since England eagerly stipulated with Spain for the right to supply the Spanish colonies with slaves from Africa; and the carrying trade, from the same ill-fated coasts to our own Southern States, then colonies, was conducted by the merchants and navigators of our own New England. Within the present generation, we have seen the slave trade denounced as a capital felony in both countries. I am not aware that any discussion of this subject, of a nature powerfully to affect the public mind, took place in Congress, till full thirty years after the adoption of the constitution. It then arose on occasion of the admission of the State of Missouri into the Union, and on the proposition to incorporate into the constitution of that State the principle of the immortal ordinance of 1787, for the organization of the territory northwest of the Ohio, viz., "There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall be duly convicted." Mr. Adams was in the department of state at the time of the admission of Missouri, and was not called upon to take any part in the discussion.

The general agitation of the subject in the commu-

nity at large dates from a still more recent period, commencing about the time of Mr. Adams's accession to the presidency. It was animated, no doubt, by the movement which took place about the same time in Great Britain, and which, in the course of a few years, resulted in that most illustrious act of Christian benevolence, by which, in a single day, eight hundred thousand fellow-beings passed from a state of bondage to one of unconditional freedom, and that without a cry or a gesture that threatened the public peace.

The public opinion of the United States, sympathizing as it must at all times with that of the other great branches of the human family, was deeply interested in the progress of these discussions abroad, and received a powerful impulse from their result. With the organized agitation, in the free States, of the questions connected with slavery, Mr. Adams did not, as a citizen I believe, intimately connect himself. Toward their introduction into Congress, as subjects of free discussion, he contributed more than any other man; than all others united. He approached the subject, however, with a caution inspired by a profound sense of its difficulty and delicacy. I know it to have been his opinion, as late as 1828, that, for the presidency and vice-presidency, the candidates ought to be selected from the two great sections of the country. His first act as a member of Congress, in 1831, was to present the memorial of

the "Friends," of Philadelphia, praying, among other things, for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia; but, while he paid the highest tribute to the motives of the petitioners, he avowed himself not prepared to grant the prayer of the memorial. But whether it was that his own opinions and feelings had shared the movement of the general mind of the age on this subject; or that he perceived, in the course of a few years, that the time had come when it must be met and discussed in all its aspects; certain it is that, from the time the right of petition was drawn distinctly in question, Mr. Adams placed himself boldly on that ground, and, from that time forward, stood firmly at his post, as the acknowledged congressional leader. No labor was too great, no attention too minute, to be bestowed by him in receiving and presenting the petitions which were poured into his hands from every part of the country. No strength or violence of opposition, or menaces of danger, deterred him from the office he had assumed; and every attempt to dishearten and silence him but established, the more firmly, the moral ascendancy which he had acquired in the house. His warmest opponents, while they condemned his policy, admitted his sincerity, admired his courage, and owned his power. His rising to address the house became the signal for mute and respectful attention; the distant clustered round his seat; the listless and the idle gave heed,

and every word that fell from his lips was listened to almost like the response of an oracle. I say this alike to the honor of the living and the dead.

I may be permitted to recall to your recollection the opening of the 26th Congress, in December, 1839, when, in consequence of a two-fold delegation from New Jersey, the house was unable, for some time, to complete its organization, and presented, to the country and the world, the perilous and discreditable aspect of the assembled representatives of the people unable to form themselves into a constitutional body. Fully to enter into the scene, it must be remembered that there are no two ideas more deeply imbedded in the Anglo-Saxon mind than these;—*one*, the omnipotence of every sovereign parliamentary, and congressional body, (I mean, of course, within the limits of its constitutional competence,) and the *other*, the absolute inability of one of these omnipotent bodies to make the slightest movement, or perform the most indifferent act, except through a formal expression of its will by its duly appointed organs. Now, on first assembling, the House has no officers, and the clerk of the preceding Congress acts, by usage, as chairman of the body, till a speaker is chosen. On this occasion, after reaching the State of New Jersey, the acting clerk declined to proceed in calling the roll, and refused to entertain any of the motions which were made for the purpose of extricating the House from its embarrass-

ment. Many of the ablest and most judicious members had addressed the House in vain, and there was nothing but confusion and disorder in prospect. Toward the close of the fourth day, Mr. Adams rose, and expectation waited on his words. Having, by a powerful appeal, brought the yet unorganized assembly to a perception of its hazardous position, he submitted a motion requiring the acting clerk to proceed in calling the roll. This and similar motions had already been made by other members. The difficulty was, that the acting clerk declined to entertain them. Accordingly, Mr. Adams was immediately interrupted by a burst of voices demanding, "How shall the question be put?" "Who will put the question?" The voice of Mr. Adams was heard above the tumult, "I intend to put the question myself!" That word brought order out of chaos. There was the master-mind. A distinguished member from South Carolina, (Mr. Rhett,) moved that Mr. Adams himself should act as chairman of the body till the House was organized, and, suiting the action to the word, himself put the motion to the House. It prevailed unanimously, and Mr. Adams was conducted to the chair, amidst the irrepressible acclamations of the spectators. Well did Mr. Wise, of Virginia, say, "Sir, I regard it as the proudest hour of your life; and if, when you shall be gathered to your fathers," (that time, alas, is now come!) "I were asked to select the words which, in

my judgment; are best calculated to give at once the character of the man, I would inscribe upon your tomb this sentence, 'I will put the question myself.'"

And thus it was that he was established, at last, in a relation to the House, which no man before had ever filled. The differences of opinion of course were great; the shock of debate often violent; but it was impossible not to respect the fearless, conscientious, unparalleled old man. Into this feeling at last every other emotion subsided; and I know not to which party the greater praise is due,—the aged statesman who had so nobly earned this homage, or the generous opponents by whom it was cheerfully paid.

Nor was this spontaneous difference a mere personal sentiment, confined to associates on the floor of Congress. It extended to the People. In the summer of 1843, Mr. Adams was invited to go to Cincinnati, and lay the corner-stone of an Observatory, about to be built by the liberal subscriptions of the friends of science in that city. His journey, from Massachusetts to Ohio, was a triumphal procession. New York poured out the population of her cities and villages to bid him welcome. Since the visit of Lafayette, the country had seen nothing like it. And if I wished to prove to the young men of the country, by the most instructive instances, that the only true greatness is that which rests on a moral basis, I would point them to the ex-president of the United

States, on the occasion referred to, and the ex-king of the French:—the one, retiring to private life, an unsuccessful, but not discredited, candidate for reëlection to the chair of state; ruling, in a serene old age, in the respect and affection of his fellow-citizens; borne, at seventy-six, almost on their shoulders, from one joyous reception to another: the other, sovereign, but *yesterday*, of a kingdom stretching from Mount Atlas to the Rhine; master of an army to bid defiance to Europe; with a palace for every month, and a revenue of three millions of francs for every day in the year; and *to-day*, (let me not seem to trample on the fallen, as I utter the words,) stealing with the aged partner of his throne and of his sorrows, in sordid disguise, from his capital; without one of that mighty host to strike a blow in his defence, if not from loyalty, at least from compassion; not daring to look round, even to see if the child were safe, on whom he had just bestowed the mockery of a crown; and compelled to beg a few francs, from the guards at his palace-door, to help him to flee from his kingdom!

But I have wandered from my theme, and must hasten with you, to contemplate a far different termination of a more truly glorious career. On the 20th of November, 1846, Mr. Adams, being then at the house of his son, in Boston, and preparing for his departure for Washington, walked out, with a friend,

to visit the new Medical College, and was struck with palsy by the way. He recovered strength enough to return in a few weeks to Washington, but it was, in his own estimation, the stroke of death. His journal,—kept with regularity for more than half a century,—stops that day; and when, after an interval of nearly four months, he resumed it, it was with the caption of “Posthumous Memoir.” Having recorded the event of the 20th of November, and his subsequent confinement, he adds, “From that hour I date my decease, and consider myself, for every useful purpose to myself and fellow-creatures, dead; and hence I call this, and what I may hereafter write, a posthumous memoir.” From this time forward, though his attendance was regularly given in the House of Representatives, he rarely took part in the debates. His summer was passed, as usual, in his native village. In the month of October last, he made a visit to Cambridge, as chairman of the Committee on the Observatory,—an institution in which he ever took the greatest interest, and of which he was, from the first, a most liberal benefactor,—and shortly afterwards drew up the admirable letter, in reference to this establishment, and the promotion generally of astronomical science,—a letter which attracted universal attention a few weeks since, in the public prints. This was the last letter, I believe, of considerable length, wholly written with his own

hand. He returned to Washington in the month of November, and resumed his usual attendance in the Capitol; but the sands were nearly run out.

Never did a noble life terminate in a more beautiful close. On Sunday, the 20th of February, he appeared in unusual health. He attended public worship, in the forenoon, at the Capitol, and, in the afternoon, at St. John's Church. At nine o'clock in the evening he retired, with his wife, to his library, where she read to him a sermon of Bishop Wilberforce, on Time,—hovering, as he was, on the verge of Eternity. This was the last night which he passed beneath his own roof. On Monday, the 21st, he rose at his usual very early hour, and engaged in his accustomed occupations with his pen. An extraordinary alacrity pervaded his movements; the cheerful step with which he ascended the Capitol was remarked by his attendants; and, at about half-past twelve, as he seemed rising in his seat, he was struck with death. His last audible words were, "This is the end of earth,"—"I am composed." He continued to breathe, but without apparent consciousness, till the evening of the twenty-third instant, and died in the Capitol.

Go there, politician, and behold a fall worth all the triumphs the Capitol ever witnessed! Go there, sceptic, you who believe that matter and mind are one, and both are a "kneaded clod," and explain how it is

that, within that aged and shattered frame, just sinking into the dust from which it was taken, there can dwell a principle of thought and feeling endued with such a divine serenity and courage, and composed, because it feels, that the end of earth is the beginning of heaven !

Thus fell, at the post of duty, one of the most extraordinary men that have appeared among us, not so much dying, as translated from the field of his earthly labors and honors to a higher sphere. I have left myself little space or strength to add any thing to the narrative of his life by way of portraying his character. Some attempt, however, of that kind, you will expect.

Mr. Adams was a man of the rarest intellectual endowments. His perception was singularly accurate and penetrating. Whenever he undertook to investigate a subject, he was sure to attain the clearest ideas of it which its nature admitted. What he knew, he knew with great precision. His argumentative powers were of the highest order, and admirably trained. When he entered the field of controversy, it was a strong and a bold man that voluntarily encountered him a second time. His memory was wonderful. Every thing he had seen or read, every occurrence in his long and crowded life, was at all times present to his

recollection. This was the more remarkable, as he had, almost from the age of boyhood, followed the practice of recording, from day to day, every incident of importance,—a practice thought to weaken the memory. This wonderful power of recollection was aided by the strict method with which he pursued his studies for the earlier part of his life, and until weighed down by the burdens of executive office, on entering the department of state. He had, withal, a diligence which nothing could weary. He rose at the earliest hour, and had an occupation for every moment of the day.

Without having made a distinct pursuit of any one branch of knowledge, he was probably possessed of a greater amount and variety of accurate information than any other man in the country. It follows, of course, that he had pushed his inquiries far beyond the profession to which he was bred, or that reading which belongs directly to the publicist and the statesman. Few among us drank so deeply at the ancient fountains. To his acquaintance with the language and literature of Greece and Rome, he added the two leading languages of continental Europe, of which the French was a second mother-tongue. The orations of Demosthenes and Cicero, the philosophical and rhetorical works of Cicero; the critical works of Aristotle and Quintilian; the historical works of Tacitus, (all of which he had translated at school;) a con-

siderable part of the poems of Ovid, whom he greatly admired; the satires of Juvenal; in French, Pascal, Molière, and La Fontaine; in English, Shakespeare, his greatest favorite, with Milton, Dryden, Pope, and Burke,—were stamped upon his memory. These were studies which he never wholly sacrificed to the calls of business, however urgent. The office of President of the United States, at least as filled by Mr. Adams, is one of extreme labor, but he found time, amidst its incessant calls and interruptions, to address a series of letters to his youngest son,—some of them, written in the busiest period of the session,—containing an elaborate analysis of several of the orations of Cicero, designed to aid the young man in the perusal of this, his favorite author. At the close of one of these letters, (as if it were impossible to fill up his industrious day,) he adds, that he is reading Evelyn's *Sylva* with great delight. Some of these letters would be thought a good day's work for a scholar by profession. But Mr. Adams wrote with a rapidity and ease, which would hardly have been suspected from his somewhat measured style. Notwithstanding the finish of his sentences, they were, like Gibbon's, struck off at once, and never had to be retouched. I remember that once, as I sat by his side in the House of Representatives, I was so much struck with the neatness and beauty of the manuscript of a report of great length which he had brought into

the House, and in which, as I turned over the leaves, I could not perceive an interlineation, that I made a remark to him on the subject. He told me it was the first draft, and had never been copied; and, in that condition, it was sent to the press, though sure to be the subject of the severest criticism.

To his profession, Mr. Adams gave but a few years of his life, and those not exclusively. He had, however, mastered the elementary learning and the forms of the law, and, in the fourth year after entering upon the practice, supported himself by his professional earnings. In later life, he appeared at the bar, on a few important occasions, with distinction and success. During his residence in Russia, Mr. Madison made him an offer of a seat on the Bench of the Supreme Court of the United States, which he declined. As a public speaker, whether at the senate or the bar, he was grave, clear, and impressive,—formidable in retort, powerful in invective,—sometimes giving the reins to a playful fancy, and, when the subject and occasion admitted, vehement and impassioned,—neglectful of the lighter graces of manner, but, at all times, riveting the attention of his audience. When, at the age of seventy-four, he came into the Supreme Court at Washington, as the volunteer counsel of the Africans on board the *Amistad*, he displayed a forensic talent, which would have added lustre to the brightest name in the profession.

But it is as a politician, as a statesman, and a chief magistrate, that he will hereafter be chiefly remembered in the annals of the country; and it will be among those who have served her the longest, the most zealously, the most ably, the most conscientiously. Breathing, as we do, an atmosphere heated with the passions of the day; swayed, as we all are, by our own prejudices, it is not for us to sit in judgment on his political course. Impartiality in our opinions of contemporaries is often the name which we give to our own adverse conceptions. It is characteristic of most men, either from temperament or education, to lean decidedly either to the conservative or progressive tendency, which forms respectively the basis of our parties. In Mr. Adams's political system there was a singular mixture of both principles. This led him, early in his political career, to adopt a course which is sanctioned by the highest authorities and examples in the country, (that of avoiding, as far as possible, an intimate and exclusive union with any party.) This policy was studiously pursued by General Washington. He retained in his cabinet the two great rival leaders, as long as they could be prevailed upon to sit side by side; and in appointing ministers to Great Britain and to France, at a very critical period of our foreign relations, he acted upon the same principle.) Mr. Jefferson, in his inaugural address in 1801, says, "We have called by different names

brethren of the same principle. We are all republicans: we are all federalists;" and in 1817, General Jackson exhorted Mr. Monroe to destroy the monster, party. It was, I think, on the same principle that Mr. Adams, when the state government was organized in 1802, was desirous of constituting the executive council by a fair representation of the two parties. But this policy, I suspect, can never be effectively pursued, at those periods when it would be of any importance, viz., times of high political excitement. A real independence of party ties, on great questions and in difficult times, will, I fear, rarely be asserted without great personal sacrifices and violent collisions. Those whose general views are in sympathy, if separated on individual measures of great interest, become, for that very reason, the more estranged; and the confidence and admiration of years are succeeded by alienation and bitterness. Burke and Fox, the dearest of friends and the trustiest of allies, parted from each other on the floor of parliament with tears, but still they parted, and forever. Happy the statesman, who, when the collisions of the day are past and forgotten, shall possess titles to the abiding interest and respect of his countrymen as brilliant and substantial as those of Mr. Adams!

In the high offices which he filled in the government, he may be safely held up as a model of a public

servant. As a diplomatist, his rank has been assigned by Washington. As an executive officer, the duty of the day, however uninviting, was discharged as if it were an object of the most attractive interest. The most obsolete and complicated claim, if it became necessary for Mr. Adams to pass upon it, was sifted to the bottom with the mechanical patience of an auditor of accounts; and woe to the fallacy, if any there were, which lurked in the statement. A "report on weights and measures," prepared by Mr. Adams in the ordinary routine of official duty, is entitled to the character of a scientific treatise. In executing the office of President of the United States, he was governed by two noble principles, oftener professed than carried into full practice. The first related to *measures*, and was an all but superstitious respect for the constitution and the law. Laboring as he did, by the strange perversity of party judgments, under the odium of latitudinarian doctrines, there never lived the public man, or the magistrate, who carried into every act of official duty a deeper sense of the binding power of the constitution and the law, as a rule of conduct from which there was no appeal. The second principle regarded *men*, and was that of conscientious impartiality. I do not mean that he did not confer important offices, when the nomination was freely at his discretion, on political friends,—the services of none others can be commanded for places of high

trust and confidence,—but political friendship never was the paramount consideration. He found a majority of the offices in the country in the possession of his political opponents, and he never removed one of them to make way for a friend. He invited Mr. Crawford, a rival candidate for the presidency, to retain his seat in the Cabinet as Secretary of the Treasury. He decided a long-standing controversy about rank between the highest officers of the army, against his political interests. He brought to every question that required his decision, however wrapped up in personal considerations, the inflexibility of a judicial tribunal.

As a man, he had, no doubt, the infirmities of human nature, (fair subjects of criticism to the happy few who are immaculate,) but not, I think, those most frequently laid to his charge. He was not, for instance, parsimonious or avaricious. Thrown, from his first start in life, upon his own resources, he determined to live within his means, and studied a decent economy; not because he loved money, but because he loved independence. That object attained, he ceased to exercise even ordinary thrift in the management of his affairs; but he did not cease, to the end of his life, to lend an ear to every call, (public or private,) upon his liberality, far beyond the extent of his income. He did not, as a minister abroad, load himself with debt, that he might enjoy the satisfac-

tion of being distanced in a race of profusion with the foreign ambassadors, whose princely incomes are swelled by princely salaries; but, from the time of his first residence at Washington, as Secretary of State, to the close of his presidency, and even of his life, the hospitality of his house and of his table was proverbial. Neither office, I believe, added a dollar to his fortune. He was plain in his personal habits and dress, because he was simple in his tastes and feelings. What attraction can there be to a thoughtful, studious man,—with great affairs upon his hands and upon his thoughts,—in the wretched and fatiguing vanities which are the principal sources of expense? There was an occasional abstraction and reserve in his manner, which led those who did not observe him more closely, to think him deficient in warmth and cordiality. But, while he wanted a certain cheerful flexibility and sprightliness, which, when accompanied with sincerity and frankness, are a very enviable endowment for a public man,—eminently useful in making friends,—yet, in real kindness of nature, and depth and tenderness of feeling, no man surpassed him. His venerable classmate bears witness that he contributed his full share to the hilarity of the social circle; and sure I am there must be around me some who can remember with me the hours, for which they have hung delighted on the fascination of his social converse. As far as the higher sym-

pathies of our nature are concerned,—the master affections, whose sphere is far above the little conventional courtesies of life,—a warmer spirit never dwelt in a human frame.

But I have left untouched the great qualities of the man, the traits which formed the heroism of his character, and would have made him, at all times, and in any career, a person of the highest mark and force. These were, his lion-heart, which knew not the fear of man; and his religious spirit, which feared God in all things, constantly, profoundly, and practically. A person of truer courage, physical and moral, I think never lived. In whatever calling of life he had grown up, this trait, I am sure, would have been conspicuous. Had he been a common sailor, he would have been the first to go to the mast-head, when the topsails were flying into ribbons. He never was called to expose his life in the field; but, had his duty required it, he was a man to lead a forlorn hope, with a steady step, through a breach spouting with fire. It was his custom,—at a time when personal violence toward individuals politically obnoxious was not uncommon,—to walk the unwatched and desolate streets of Washington alone, and before sun-rise. This may be set down to the steadiness of nerves, which is shared by men of inferior tone of mind. But in his place in the House of Representatives,—in the great struggle into which he plunged, from

a conscientious sense of duty, in the closing years of his life,—and in the boldness and resolution with which he trod on ground never before thrown open to free discussion, he evinced a moral courage, founded on the only true basis of moral principle, of which I know no brighter example. It was with this he warred, and with this he conquered; strong in the soundness of his honest heart, strong in the fear of God,—the last great dominant principle of his life and character.

There was the hiding of his power. There it was that he exhibited, in its true type, the sterling quality of the good old stock of which he came. Offices, and affairs, and honors, and studies, left room in his soul for *Faith*. No man laid hold, with a firmer grasp, of the realities of life; but no man dwelt more steadily on the mysterious realities beyond life. He entertained a profound, I had almost said an obsolete, reverence for sacred things. The daily and systematic perusal of the BIBLE was an occupation with which no other duty was allowed to interfere. He attended the public offices of social worship with a constancy seldom witnessed in this busy and philosophic age. Still there was nothing austere or narrow-minded in his religion; there was no affectation of rigor in his life or manners; no unreflecting adoption of traditionary opinions in matters of belief. He remained, to the end of his days, an inquirer after truth. He regularly attended the public worship of churches widely

differing from each other in doctrinal peculiarities. The daily entry of his journal, for the latter part of his life, begins with a passage extracted from Scripture, followed with his own meditation and commentary; and, thus commencing the day, there is little reason to doubt that, of his habitual reflections, as large a portion was thrown forward to the world of spirits, as was retained by the passing scene.

The death of such a man is no subject of vulgar sorrow. Domestic affliction itself bows with resignation at an event so mature in its season; so rich in its consolations; so raised into sublimity by the grandeur of the parting scene. Of all the great orators and statesmen in the world, he alone has, I think, lived out the full term of a long life in actual service, and died on the field of duty, in the public eye, within the halls of public council. The great majority of public men, who most resemble him, drop away satisfied, perhaps disgusted, as years begin to wane; many break down at the meridian; in other times and countries, not a few have laid their heads on the block. Demosthenes, at the age of sixty, swallowed poison, while the pursuer was knocking at the door of the temple in which he had taken refuge. Cicero, at the age of sixty-four, stretched out his neck from his litter to the hired assassin. Our illustrious fellow-citizen, in the fulness of his years and of his honors, upon a day that was shaking, in Europe, the pillars

of a monarchy to the dust, fell calmly at his post, amidst venerating associates, and breathed his last within the Capitol :

“ And, which is best and happiest yet, all this
With God not parted from him,—
But favoring and assisting to the end.
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail,
Or knock the breast ; no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise or blame,—nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us, in a death so noble.”

THE FOLLOWING IS THE ORDER OF THE SERVICES ON OCCASION OF THE DELIVERY OF THE
FOREGOING EULOGY.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

ORDER OF SERVICES

AT

FANEUIL HALL, SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 1848,

AS A TESTIMONY OF RESPECT TO THE MEMORY OF

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS,

BY THE

LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

I.

VOLUNTARY, BY THE ORCHESTRA.

II.

SOLEMN CHANT, BY THE CHOIR.

1. Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord : that delighteth greatly in his commandments.
2. Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness : the righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance.
3. The hope of the ungodly is like dust that is blown away by the wind : like the smoke which is dispersed here and there by a tempest :

4. And passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day.
5. But the righteous live forevermore : their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High.
6. Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand : for with his right hand shall he cover them, and with his arm shall he protect them.
7. The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them : in the sight of the unwise they seem to die, and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction.
8. But they are in peace : for though they be punished in the sight of men,
9. Yet is their hope full of immortality : and having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded.
10. For God hath proved them, and found them worthy for himself : and they shall judge the nations, and their Lord shall reign forever.
11. I heard a voice from heaven, saying, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord : yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.

III.

PRAYER, BY THE REV. C. A. BARTOL,

CHAPLAIN OF THE SENATE.

IV.

HYMN.—TUNE, "SAVANNAH."

O what is Man, great Maker of Mankind,
 That thou to him so great respect dost bear !
 That thou adorn'st him with so great a mind,
 Mak'st him a king and e'en an angel's peer.

O what a lively life, what heavenly power,
 What spreading virtue, what a sparkling fire,
 How great, how plentiful, how rich a dower,
 Dost Thou within this dying flesh inspire !

Thou hast not given these blessings for a day,
 Nor made them on the body's life depend ;
 The soul, though made in time, survives for aye,
 And, though it hath beginning, sees no end.

Heaven waxeth old, and all the spheres above
 Shall one day faint, and their swift motion stay ;
 And time itself, in time, shall cease to move,
 Only the soul survives and lives for aye.

Cast down thyself then, Man, and strive to raise
 The glory of thy Maker's sacred name ;
 Use all thy powers, that blessed Power to praise,
 Which gives thee power to be, and use the same.

V:

EULOGY, BY THE HON. EDWARD EVERETT.

VI.

AIR AND CHORUS, FROM HANDEL'S "MESSIAH."

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth : and though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep.

Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead : For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

THE MUSIC WAS PERFORMED BY THE HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY.

ERRATUM.—On page 6, line 2, for *pending* read *preceding*.

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